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ABSTRACT

This paper introduces and explores new counterpressures in educational governance, the central theme of this symposium. Drawing on research in the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries, but giving particular attention to Australia, New Zealand, Britain, Canada, and the United States, this paper provides an international perspective on shifts in patterns of educational governance that seem paradoxical and are currently the cause of uncertainty and change at all levels. National and state governments are adopting a more powerful but focused role in defining outcomes and establishing frameworks of accountability (a centralizing trend). Institutions at the site level have been given greater responsibility for strategic planning and resource allocation (a decentralizing trend within the centrally determined framework). Emergent policy issues and values are generally concerned with quality, effectiveness, equity, efficiency, accountability, and adaptability. The nature of the resulting tensions and responses are identified and analyzed. Implications at the system and site level are offered. The broad spectrum from elementary to higher and further education is covered, with particular attention given to elementary and secondary levels. Accepting that change, including turbulence, is now a permanent condition in education, educators can gain some measure of stability by understanding, acccepting, and exploiting the new realities. The various tensions can be resolved, and the transition to a new era of governance can be managed. (29 references) (MLH)

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PARADOX AND UNCERTAINTY IN THE GOVERNANCE OF EDUCATION

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PARADOX AND UNCERTAINTY IN THE GOVERNANCE OF EDUCATION

ABSTRACT

This paper introduces and explores the central theme of the symposium on "New Counter Pressures in Educational Governance: An International Cross-Sectoral Perspective." Drawing on research in OECD countries, but giving particular attention to Australia, New Zealand, Britain, Canada and the United States, this paper provides an international perspective on shifts in patterns of governance in education which, at first sight, are paradoxical, and which are currently the cause of uncertainty and major change at all levels. National and state governments are adopting a more powerful but focused role in defining outcomes and establishing frameworks of accountability (a centralizing trend). Institutions at the site level have been given greater responsibility for strategic planning and resource allocation (a decentralizing trend within the aforementioned centrally-determined framework). The nature of the resulting tensions and responses are identified and analyzed. Implications at the system and site level are offered. The broad spectrum from elementary to higher and further education are covered, with particular attention given to elementary and secondary levels.

A TURBULENT ENVIRONMENT

If account is taken of events throughout the western world we must now accept that change is a permanent condition in education. Indeed, I suspect that the late 1980's and early 1990's will mark the most significant changes in the governance of public education in this century and that we are now in a period of transition marked by paradox, uncertainty and turbulence.

Writing in Managing in Turbulent Times, a book set in the business sector but which foreshadowed aspects of the changes now being experienced in public education, Peter Drucker (1981, p.10) warned that "the greatest and most dangerous turbulence . . . results from the collision between the delusions of the decision makers, whether in governments, in the top managements of businesses, or in union leadership, and the realities". I believe we can gain some measure of stability in this period of transition by acknowledging the realities. I also share Drucker's optimism when he argues, further, that "a time for turbulence is also one of great opportunity for those who can understand, accept, and exploit the new realities. It is above all a time of opportunity for leadership" (Drucker 1981, p.10). I would like to take up this challenge, starting with a brief description of some of these "new realities".

THE NEW REALITIES IN A SHIFTING PATTERN OF GOVERNANCE IN EDUCATION

The following is a brief account of shifts in patterns of governance in public education across a number of western countries:

- Britain is embarking on the most comprehensive package of reforms of the century, with England and Wales to have a national curriculum and a national testing program, with all secondary and most elementary schools to have control of their own budgets, including staff, through a system of local management of schools (LMS), and with schools having the power to "opt out" of control by their local education authorities on the majority vote of parents.

- In the United States there have been recommendations from influential organizations for the introduction of school-site management after several years of increasing control of curriculum and testing at the state level, with a number of promising initiatives already under way.

- In Australia, the foundations are already being laid for a national curriculum framework and testing program, at the same time that state governments are, on the one hand, adopting a stronger role as far as goals, priorities and accountability are concerned and, on the other hand, shifting significant authority and responsibility to the school level.

- In Canada there has been increased centralization in most provinces, especially in the areas of curriculum and testing, but also a trend to school-based planning and decision making, with the evolution over ten years of a highly devolved system in the Edmonton Public School District which has shaped a number of developments in the international setting.

- In a policy statement entitled "Tomorrow's Schools" issued by the Minister for Education, David Lange (1988), who is also the Prime Minister, the government of New Zealand accepted the major recommendations in the Picot Report (Picot 1988) which called for a virtual transfer of decision making to schools within national guidelines.

These patterns were described in terms of their impact on elementary and secondary education. Similar patterns are emerging in higher education, with recent developments in Australia and New Zealand (each the subject of more detailed analysis in other papers in this symposium) among the more far-reaching. In each instance, national governments are re-structuring education, especially in Australia, but more than ever before are setting priorities for teaching and research and establishing a powerful framework of accountability, at the same time as they are encouraging a greater capacity at the institutional level for planning and resource allocation (Dawkins, 1988; Lange, 1989).

In general, governments in many countries are adopting a more powerful and focused role in terms of setting goals, establishing priorities and building frameworks for accountability -- all constituting a centralizing trend in the centralization-decentralization continuum -- at the same time as authority and responsibility for key functions are being shifted to the school level -- a decentralizing trend in the centralization-decentralization continuum. Much uncertainty arises because these trends, almost paradoxically, are occurring simultaneously or in rapid succession.

An initial reaction in each nation or state has been that these initiatives have been capricious or arbitrary, being an ill-considered attempt to implement an ideological stance as far as education is concerned or an inappropriate application of economic or managerial values to a field of human service such as education. Strong union opposition was evident at the outset in each instance although, with time, the union position has been muted, if not supportive, as initial fears of a "hidden agenda", harmful to the profession and to the quality of education, have not been realized to any great extent. Many academics have adopted a strong critical stance (see, for example, Bates, 1988, Codd, 1988 and Grace, 1988 in respect of changes for elementary and secondary education in New Zealand; Bessant, 1988, and Williams, 1988, in respect of changes for higher education in Australia).

While planning and implementation of change have left a lot to be desired in several instances, it is to some extent reassuring that governments are making similar responses to similar issues and that these responses seem to be independent of ideology. Drucker made this point in calling for acceptance of certain realities when managing in turbulent times:

> The new realities fit neither the assumptions of the Left nor those of the Right. They do not mesh at all with "what everybody knows". They differ even more from what everybody, regardless of political persuasion, still believes reality to be. "What is" differs totally from what both Right and Left believe "ought to be". (Drucker 1981, p.10)

POLICY ISSUES FOR GOVERNANCE IN PUBLIC EDUCATION

Why are governments responding in similar fashion, regardless of ideology? What are the common issues? What are the underlying values? These are generally concerned with quality, effectiveness, equity, efficiency, accountability and adaptability. Brief explanations are offered, sufficient to suggest commonality across national or state settings and to highlight their inter-relatedness in terms of the manner in which they are being addressed.

Quality

That a central concern is about quality is clear from recent OECD reports on education, including one devoted exclusively to the issue which states that "concern for the quality of education in schools is today among the highest priorities in all OECD countries. It will remain so for the foreseeable future" (OECD, 1987, p.123). The report acknowledges different meanings of the term and differences in approach when efforts are made to effect improvement. It concludes that definitions of quality "are crucially determined by educational aims" (p.125) and that "how the curriculum is defined, planned, implemented and evaluated ultimately determines the quality of education that is provided" (p.127).

This concern underlies much of the interest in national or state curriculum and testing programs and the setting of priorities for teaching and research in higher education (centralizing trends). It also accounts for interest in an enhanced capacity at the school or institutional level to define, plan, implement and evaluate within a centrally-determined framework (decentralizing trends). That is, while measures are being taken to ensure that all schools address common aims through a common curriculum framework or a common set of priorities, there is recognition that quality in terms of learning at the most important level of all, the student, can only be achieved if schools and institutions have the capacity deliver the curriculum in a way that satisfies the needs and interests of the particular mix of students in the local setting.

There is, however, a broader concern for quality that is having an impact on patterns of governance. This is the concern for general quality in life which is now determined in large measure by the capacity of a nation to perform well in an international economy. There is a sense in many nations, including Australia, that we are "falling behind" and that, to become more competitive, we must ensure a highly responsive economy which calls, in turn, for a highly responsive system of education which equips citizens with required knowledge, skills and attitudes. This relationship between education and economic needs has, of course, always been there. Education has always

made a significant contribution to the economic well-being of the nation. The recent rhetoric of governments has simply brought the relationship into sharp focus, with a stridency and urgency that many find discomforting. It is likely that the relationship will in future be less prominent in our public discourse. Nevertheless, it is currently a reality which accounts in part for the stronger role our governments are taking in many areas of policy in education.

School effectiveness

While the issue of quality has to a considerable extent ensured a continuing and strong role for government in setting goals and establishing priorities, recent research on school effectiveness and school improvement provides support for a shift in responsibility to the school level within a centrally-determined framework. Much of the research has been carried out in the United States, with the following a sample of findings and recommendations.

Purkey and Smith (1985) offered a model "for creating an effective school" which drew from literature in four areas: classroom research on teacher effectiveness, research on the implementation of educational innovations and school organization which identify the role of school culture in school improvement, research in work places other than education, and consistency between effective schools' research and the experience of practitioners. Their model contained thirteen characteristics, nine of which can be implemented relatively quickly, while four defining the school's culture take time because they require the development of an appropriate climate. In the first group they included an approach to the administration of schools wherein "the staff of each school is given a considerable amount of responsibility and authority in determining the exact means by which they address the problem of increasing academic performance. This includes giving staffs more authority over curricular and instructional decisions and the allocation of building resources" (Purkey & Smith, 1985, p.358).

Finn (1984) addressed another implication of the effective schools' research when he called for "strategic independence" for schools. He noted that "the central problem faced by policy makers who attempt to transform the findings of 'effective schools' research into improved educational practice at state or local level is the tension between school-level autonomy and system-wide uniformity" (p.518). His nine commandments for strategic independence included recognition of the school as "the key organizational unit in the public school system" (p.520); the setting of "rigorous educational standards for entire states and communities but [emphasising] broad goals and essential outcomes, not specific procedures, curricular, or timetables" (p.521); encouraging "schools to be different, except for the core of cognitive skills and knowledge that all students in a system or

state should acquire" (ibid); and devolving "more budgetary authority . . . to the school level" (p.523).

Drawing on a similar research base, the National Education Association and the National Association of Secondary School Principals issued a joint report in 1986 in which it was stated that "The NASSP and NEA remain committed to the principle that substantial decision-making authority at the school site is the essential pre-requisite for quality education" (NEA-NASSP, 1986, p.13).

A degree of self-management at the school level within a centrally determined framework is also supported by recent research on school improvement, including that by Miles and his colleagues (Miles 1987). Longitudinal studies in urban secondary schools in the United States revealed a cause-and-effect relationship between school improvement and some measure of school autonomy, especially in the area of resource allocation, with empowerment of staff in decision making at the school level.

The most recent research by James Coleman provides very powerful support for establishing the strongest possible linkages between school and community. Coleman and Hoffer (1987) examined the performance of public and private schools on key indicators and highlighted the importance of what they termed "social capital" as a key determinant of success. Social capital is the network of mutual support involving the family, the student, the school and (where appropriate) the church.

The findings from such research has been explicitly used in the formulation of policy on decentralization, especially in the United States. The report of the National Governors' Association (1986) and of the Carnegie Task Force on Teaching as a Profession (1986) are examples of reports which have influenced new patterns of governance in several states. The relationship between research and policy is not immediately evident in reports which have led to new patterns of governance in other countries under consideration in this paper.

Equity

It seems there is a merging of two values -- equity and excellence -- which have, in the past, tended to shape policy in different ways. As far as equity is concerned, there has been a shift in focus in recent years. Initially the goal in public policy was to ensure that every student could attend a place of learning ("equity in access"). The goal then shifted to ensuring that each place of learning received a fair share of resources to enable it to meet in broad terms the educational needs of all of its students ("equity in resource allocation"). In Australia, for example, this goal was evident in the late 1960's and 1970's when the Commonwealth Schools Commission established the complex series of grants which were designed to achieve a large measure of equity in resource allocation among schools and to meet the educational needs of particular populations of students.

But there has also been a shift in focus as far as excellence is concerned. Whereas excellence has traditionally implied superior achievement by a few, it is interesting to note that recent usage brings a meaning which comes close to the emerging view of equity. An illustration is the definition of excellence offered by the National Commission on Excellence in Education in the United States; it was really an eloquent call for equity:

> We define "excellence" to mean several related things. At the level of the individual learner, it means performing at the boundary of individual ability in ways that test and push back personal limits, in school and in the work place. Excellence characterizes a school or college that sets high expectations and goals for all learners, then tries in every way possible to help students reach them. Excellence characterizes a society that has adopted these policies, for it will then be prepared through the education and skill of its people to respond to the challenges of a rapidly changing world. (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983, p.12)

In policy terms, the outcome in the United States was the aforementioned centrally-determined curriculum and testing programs, reflecting a continuing concern for quality, in the so-called "first wave" of reform. The "second wave", influenced more by findings from research on school effectiveness and school improvement, has been marked by an interest in decentralization and school-site management.

The emerging view of equity and excellence suggests an emphasis on ensuring that each individual student has access to the particular mix of resources in order to best meet the needs and interests of that student, with resources in this mix being considered broadly to include school, curriculum, learning experience, teachers, supplies, equipment and services. Greater attention is being given to each student, a strategy reinforced by advances in knowledge about developmental and learning processes. Advances in technology have also made possible a variety of highly individualized approaches. In terms of administrative processes to support learning and teaching, it seems that determining what the particular mix of resources should be for each student is a decision which may be made at the school level to a greater extent than has been traditionally been the case. Expressed another way, it seems that the merging of equity and excellence may involve, among other things, a shift from uniformity in resource allocation, with all decisions at the center, to different patterns of resource allocation according to the particular mix of student needs at the school level, with more decisions at the school level in determining these patterns (see Garms, Guthrie and Pierce, 1978, for a similar line of argument).

The issue of equity thus has implications at all levels of education, reinforcing the need for a high level of

centralization in some matters but raising the possibility of some measure of decentralization for others.

Efficiency

A reality for all with an interest in education is the need for efficiency in resource allocation. It requires only brief reflection to appreciate that it is only through the efficient allocation of resources that the three values previously explored -- quality, effectiveness and equity -- can be optimally achieved.

Governments at all levels are concerned about efficiency. If anything, the need for efficiency is escalating as governments everywhere are faced with an increasingly complex and ever-changing set of demands for public services whether they be in education, health, welfare, transport, law enforcement or defence. And these demands are being made at a time when, in many countries, there are parallel demands for a reduction in the level of taxation and resources are scarce, whatever their source. Governments can only respond with an approach to policy making and resource allocation which takes account of costs and outcomes so that priorities can be set and re-set. The aim at any one point in time is to ensure an optimal match of scarce resources to a complex, ever-changing mix of needs, wants and demands.

Efficiency thus becomes a key consideration at all levels of education where an increasing array of needs, wants and demands must be met with scarce resources. The capacity to set and re-set priorities; to monitor inputs, processes and outcomes; and to tailor resources and programs in the face of shifting priorities and in the light of information gained through continuous monitoring calls for high levels of skill in administration throughout a system of education. Expressed bluntly, every instance of duplicated or wasted expenditure or every instance where resources continue to be allocated to areas of low priority (although they may have been high in the past) means the needs of some students will not be met: if we are concerned about equity and effectiveness and quality then we must strive for greater efficiency.

Accountability

Implied in the foregoing is acceptance of a framework for accountability and the selection of appropriate indicators, defined here as attributes of an educational program, measures of which are utilized in making judgements about the worth of the program. Acceptance is implied on an international scale with a number of recent reports on the subject.

The following questions are appropriate in the current environment:

- What are the indicators related to inputs, processes and outcomes which will assist governments in setting priorities and allocating resources in their continuing drive to achieve quality, effectiveness and equity through efficiency?

- Who shall determine these indicators and how shall information be gathered and aggregated to facilitate the decision making process at the system level?

- What indicators can be used at the school or institutional level to meet school needs?

- Who shall determine indicators at the school or institutional level and how shall information be gathered and aggregated to meet needs at the system level as well as the school or institutional level?

- How can tensions between system and school or institutional needs in the use of indicators be resolved?

Determining answers to these questions is proving difficult but to refrain from addressing them, or to deny the realities of the environment in which they are being asked will, in my view, only contribute to our sense of uncertainty and an undue level of turbulence.

Adaptability

A capacity at all levels to adapt is evident in much of this analysis. Setting and re-setting priorities; monitoring and tailoring; ensuring, particularly at the school or institutional level, that the program of learning and teaching matches as far as possible the needs and interests of students, and that valued outcomes are achieved, demand a high level of adaptability.

A further stimulus is the increasing interest in the community in the exercise of choice, For a variety of reasons, including greater affluence, access to a wider range of information about schools, limited employment opportunities for the young and higher levels of education in the community, parents and students are exercising choice among schools in their pursuit of what is perceived as higher quality in education. There is the metaphor if not the reality of "a market" in education, with parents and students seen as clients or consumers and a call for school systems and schools to be more sensitive to market needs. The response has generally been in the direction of decentralization, encouraging greater diversity among schools, a

measure of "de-regulation" through the abandonment of attendance zones and, in the case of England and Wales, the "opt out" provision of the 1988 Education Act which allows schools to leave their local education authorities on the majority vote of parents, receiving their funds directly from the national government.

As for the issue of accountability, the response should generally be one of acceptance, since the forces which underlie interest in choice are beyond our means to control. What we can do, however, is to ensure that choice is exercised on the basis of relevant information about schools and their programs.

TENSIONS IN NEW PATTERNS OF GOVERNANCE

Several tensions are evident in new patterns of governance. Considered here are tensions at the center and tensions between the center and the institution. The focus here, as in the remaining sections of the paper, is largely on governance in the elementary and secondary sectors.

Tensions at the center

Wirt (1988) offered a comparative perspective on the role of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) in Australia, Britain and United States, noting that "at different times and with different speeds, these CEOs have undergone successive stages of challenge from citizens and their elected parliaments, authorities and boards" (p.43). These challenges have occurred across a range of areas traditionally regarded as "professional": pedagogy, curriculum, finance, personnel and student testing. They are most evident in the initiatives described earlier as far as national or state curriculum and testing programs are concerned. These are areas where, according to Wirt, the CEO and other senior professionals have traditionally and almost exclusively exercised power. Of particular current interest is the short-term contract appointment of Dr Russell Ballard as Director-General of Education in New Zealand. Ballard, who comes from the field of forestry, has a brief to effect change in New Zealand by October 1, 1989.

Wirt believes "there is clear evidence" of a shift in the role of the CEO "from technical emphasis and value neutrality to a more political effort to promote professional goals" (Wirt 1988, p.47). He offered several explanations, including political impatience at an apparent lack of responsiveness among senior officers, especially in the face of declining resources; ideological shifts which have promoted a distrust of public officials; and a more highly educated citizenry with relatively youthful political leadership that demands solutions to difficult problems. This shift from the "neutral technical" to the "political professional" role calls for new skills in mobilizing

support, new sensitivities to the needs of the community, and new approaches to formal training and career development. Wirt is optimistic that deeper understanding can "provide a CEO with more effective leadership amid a power-sharing and elite challenging context" (Wirt 1988, p.57).

Observations on the role of the CEO do not apply to all countries. In France, for example, what Wirt describes as a "political professional" role has, in fact, been evident for more than a century. Indeed, one might argue that it prevailed in former times in other countries at least to the extent that the CEO was traditionally expected to respond to shifts in political ideology as governments changed. Perhaps the political dimension has broadened as governments and government agencies alike have had to respond to the wider range of powerfully articulated views of an increasing number of interest groups. Or again, given greater complexity in demand for service by government agencies, the shift may well be a shift within a range of "political professional" roles and a shift toward "powerlessness".

Tension between center and schools

Tension between the center and schools may be described in a number of ways. For example, central constraints on decision making at the school level emerge as an issue in recent studies of school improvement. Miles and his colleagues found that relatively high levels of school autonomy, especially in planning and resource allocation, are important factors in improvement in urban high schools in the United States. Farrar described these findings in the light of constraints on school decision making:

> I think there is a paradox in this situation, one that has serious implications for the prospect of improving urban high schools through school-based planning models. These approaches aim to decentralize authority, to shift responsibility for improvement needs, plans and strategies from the district to the school, where ownership and collegiality foster faculty commitment to improvement. Yet groups outside the school make a number of education decisions that seriously hamper the school's efforts. Some decisions . . . have the effect of maintaining or re-centralizing responsibility to the district or state over critical school functions and policies. This leaves building administrators and faculties with decision making responsibility only along the periphery of school affairs. (Farrar 1987, p.8)

This tension is palpable in Britain at this time as the government implements the 1988 Education Act which will achieve a high degree of centralization as far as curriculum and testing are concerned but also a high degree of decentralisation through the local management of schools. Participants in public and

legislative debates fiercely contested the issue of curriculum control, with the government's initial rather detailed and prescriptive approach (Department of Education and Science, 1987) coming under heavy fire. Those advocating that the values of choice should prevail called for the government to drop this aspect of policy altogether (see, for example, O'Keeffe, 1987; Sexton, 1987; Sexton, 1988).

With research on school effectiveness and school improvement so consistently supportive of a relatively high degree of autonomy at the school level, a reduction of tension seems dependent on minimizing the number of constraining rules and regulations. A strong central role is important but should be limited to establishing a vision for the system as a whole, setting expectations and standards for student learning, and providing strong support for schools.

The position of Albert Shanker, President of the American Federation of Teachers, is interesting in regard to this issue. While Purkey and Smith (1985) anticipated union resistance to school-site management, Shanker has given strong support to decentralization and believes that unity can be better attained through commitment to a shared vision than through extensive rules and regulations:

> How would the school reform movement have developed if these principles of management [decentralization] had been followed? For one thing, we would have looked for ways to encourage more decision making by teachers in classrooms and principals in schools, rather than bind them by rules and regulations set down by legislatures and state education departments. . . . And perhaps most important of all . . . our education leadership would have risen above the petty squabbles about merit pay, the length of the school day and school year, and created a vision of our public school system, what it has meant to our country, why it succeeded in the past and what challenges lie ahead, and shared that vision with (teachers, board members and parents) without whom our goals will not be accomplished. (Shanker, 1987)

It should be noted, however, that Shanker's stance places him at the "cutting edge" of opinion as far as unions are concerned. Union resistance anticipated by Purkey and Smith may still be a factor in the United States, as is currently evident in Britain, Australia and New Zealand.

Role conflict, uncertainty and ambiguity: resolving the tension

An initial reaction of those at the center when responsibility has been decentralized to the school level has been a perceived loss of power. This has been the case in instances where, for example, decisions on the allocation of resources have been decentralized. Those who previously

determined budgets for each school in more or less precise terms may no longer do so; those who formerly allocated staff to schools in precise categories according to centrally-determined system-wide formulae may no longer have this responsibility; supervisors in subject disciplines and staff development programs, whose responsibilities have been to allocate resources for particular programs on the basis of their personal judgements or according to some policy that applies to all schools, may find that schools no longer need or seek their services. Yet they know that their work was previously valued and that the same decisions must continue to be made at some level.

The key to resolution of this tension seems to lie in a smooth transition to a new set of roles and responsibilities for people employed at the system level so that, instead of a loss of power in regard to old tasks, an individual soon acquires power in a new set of tasks through a transition process which is well understood. What is involved becomes apparent if the general pattern of central responsibility in new arrangements is examined. The central authority now has a more sharply focused responsibility in formulating policy, setting priorities, establishing frameworks for accountability, allocating resources to schools in equitable fashion, providing support to schools and monitoring the quality of education however defined. Within this still powerful but focused framework, a person who was formerly, for example, a supervisor in a subject discipline, rather than exercising a direct oversight of people at the school level, will have the responsibility of making a contribution to the formulation of policy and the setting of priorities in their areas of interest and expertise. Such a person will also be involved in the selection of indicators, measures and standards and then determining from time to time a target level of performance upon which judgements about effectiveness and efficiency might be made. Ensuring that support is provided for schools will also be an important responsibility, with ongoing monitoring for the various indicators an important, indeed necessary task. A smooth transition and commitment to these new roles is aided, as it is in all fields of endeavor, by leaders who provide from the outset a vision of what is intended and then successfully communicate and gain commitment to that vision. That vision usually includes a vision of the process of change.

An example of successful transition is offered in the Edmonton Public School District in Alberta, Canada. This system is selected because the pattern of decision making featuring a high level of decentralization has been in place for nearly a decade. It offers a model for many matters under consideration in this paper. It is acknowledged that this setting is unique (like any other) but the general principles of action set out above, as illustrated in Edmonton, seem widely applicable.

After a three year trial of school-based budgeting, system-wide implementation in Edmonton proceeded in almost two hundred schools with a minimum of prior staff development but with many concerns among staff at the system level. Successful adoption of

new roles then evolved over the next seven years or so. The system had the benefit of the same person occupying the superintendency throughout the change, with this person offering a clearly articulated vision from the outset. He fits the "politically professional" rather than "technically neutral" image (Wirt 1988). Now institutionalized is a process wherein the elected school board sets priorities each year which must be addressed in all schools. Budget preparation and staff selection are wholly decentralized to schools. Accountability in an educational sense is addressed through a system-wide set of standardized tests in language, mathematics, science and social studies at two points in elementary schooling and at one point in secondary. Target levels of performance are set each year. Those employed at the center have responsibilities in the associated processes in the manner outlined above. A special feature addressed in more detail later in the paper is concerned with a recent trial in which planning for central curriculum and student services has been decentralized to schools, with the schools involved now able to plan and choose such services according to need and from whatever source they feel will best provide the service, even if that source is outside the system. The more sharply focused and highly responsive service role for those employed at the system level is evident.

In summary, then, the key to resolution of problems related to role conflict, uncertainty and ambiguity in decision making seems to be the gaining of commitment to a shared vision, a careful specification of new roles and responsibilities which make clear that responsibility in one domain is invariably replaced by responsibility in another, the adoption of a strong service orientation, an evolutionary process for the management of change, and the acquisition of the necessary knowledge and skill.

MAKING THE TRANSITION

In general, I believe that shifts in the pattern of governance in public education, which have crossed national and ideological boundaries, are appropriate, given a universal concern for quality, and the need to address issues related to effectiveness, equity, excellence, efficiency, accountability and adaptability in determining the means to achieve that end. A substantial capacity for self-management at the school or institutional level within a centrally-determined framework seems an eminently sensible pattern of governance. The central issue is the manner in which we manage the transition and resolve the tensions set out above. What follows are some possible ways in which this can be done, with explanation and illustration in the elementary and secondary sectors.

Requirements at the system level

The most important requirements at a system level are the capacities to prepare a strategic plan, to build a framework for accountability and to support a self-managing capacity at the school level. The first of these, the strategic plan, is now making its appearance in many school systems. Essentially, it is the outcome of an "environmental scan" and involves the setting of priorities for action in the short, medium and long term, taking account of likely levels of resources and the preparation of broad plans for action. The most effective strategic plans appear to be short rather than long, and are constantly reviewed and refined in the light of the shifting priorities of governments and new "threats" and "opportunities" in the immediate environment. The strategic plan provides a framework for planning for all units in the system, including schools.

As far as accountability is concerned, all units in a school system, whether at central or school levels, are expected to provide information on the extent to which goals, policies and priorities are being addressed and intended outcomes have been achieved. Expectations must be communicated and information must be collected and analysed. Two initiatives will facilitate the process. First, at the central level, strategic plans for the system as a whole will provide a focus for the efforts of officers involved in the process. Second, at the school level, will be the existence of what are being described in the New Zealand context as "school charters": essentially a relatively short document, agreed to by the Minister for Education and the board of trustees of a school, which sets out the mission, needs and priorities of the school as well as the broad strategies which will be employed to address centrally-determined goals and priorities. The charter is the basis for allocating funds to the school. It also provides a focus for the work of review and audit teams which are part of the central framework. Charters are also proposed for higher education in New Zealand. They have their counterparts in Australia with the so-called "educational profiles" for institutions of higher education.

The key elements in what has been traditionally the inspector's role seem indispensible no matter what structures and other organizational arrangements are put in place. The recent OECD report on quality of schooling sketched the major elements of what is desired at the system level in the following terms:

> However great the autonomy enjoyed by schools, they are still answerable to administrative authorities at local, regional and national level that have responsibility for:
>
> (i) Setting quality targets and providing the means of attaining them;
>
> (ii) Monitoring the implementation of appropriate

strategies;

(iii) Conducting regular appraisals of performance in association with the schools concerned

(OECD, 1987, p.89)

Perhaps the most important guidelines relate to the support of schools. Developments in other countries confirm that continued support is essential, but they also suggest that organizational arrangements may differ in significant ways to those which have prevailed. Consider, for example, experience in Edmonton, Alberta. In 1986, decisions related to the deployment of centralized curriculum and student support services were decentralized to fourteen schools out of more than two hundred schools in the system. The purposes of this trial arrangement were related to enhanced efficiency and effectiveness of support services, improved capability at the school level to determine the nature and level of support services required to meet the needs of students, and improvement in the way in which support services were accessed and delivered. Schools in the project had their lump-sum allocations supplemented by amounts which reflected the historical use of support services according to type of school and level of student need. Allocations were then included in school-based budgets. Standard costs for various types of service were then determined, on a per hour or per incident basis, with costs charged to the school as service was requested. Schools could choose services outside those provided by the system.

It is noteworthy that the level of utilization of support declined in the first year of the trial, with schools opting in many instances to acquire other resources to solve their problems. For example, additional teachers were deployed or schools turned to other schools in their search for expertise. A clearer definition of the requirements for a central support service also emerged. This definition offered: (1) a vision which included the support of schools and central services as well as the opportunity to influence the setting of policies and priorities in the system and in external agencies; (2) a clarification of responsibilities between central support and schools; (3) approaches to needs assessment which encouraged schools to plan and then allocate resources in their budgets for provision of services, (4) service agreements with schools; (5) enhancement of client autonomy; (6) integrated delivery of services to schools; (7) flexible modes of service delivery; (8) flexible staffing patterns for those employed in central support services; (9) development of generic knowledge, skills and attitudes as well as skills required in consultation and areas of specialization; (10) capacity for networking; (11) capability for research and development and (12) capacity for monitoring the quantity and quality of service, including the opportunity to

contribute to the identification of centrally-determined outcomes, standards and indicators (Caldwell, Smilanich & Spinks, 1988).

School support services in New Zealand will, with the exception of special education services, be available to schools in a quasi free market; that is, while services will be available to schools through support centres, schools will be free to utilize these services or not, depending on their judgements about the quality of service. They may choose to secure service from any provider. The central issue is quality of service and considerations of marketability are as relevant here as they are in the broader setting considered earlier.

Requirements at the school level

I believe we now know the requirements at the school level and the manner in which the associated capacities can be developed. At least five key areas of knowledge and skill are required if a capacity for self-management within a centrally-determined framework is to be acquired:

- School administrators will have knowledge about a wide range of approaches to learning and teaching and the creation of appropriate environments for learning and teaching. Included here is a capacity for instructional leadership which places emphasis on the contemporary view of supervision ("working with and through others"), especially in collaborative or collegial approaches. This is the core of knowledge for administrators in the self-managing school.

- School administrators will have the capacity to work within national and state frameworks and priorities and with teachers, students and members of the community in the design and delivery of a curriculum to meet the needs of every student. Included here is an understanding of trends in society ("the new realities"), especially as they concern the economy and the nature of work.

- School administrators will make an ongoing and systematic approach to program evaluation a feature of the administrative process. Evaluation will be an important element in the culture of the school.

- School administrators will be able to address in practical terms the various generalizations which have emerged from recent studies of leaders and leadership, especially that on gaining commitment to a shared vision of quality.

- School administrators will be able to design and implement an ongoing, collegial, cyclical approach to goal-setting, policy-making, planning, budgeting, implementing and evaluating. Included here is a capacity for school level strategic planning. The development of such a cycle would seem to be a pre-requisite for success in self-management.

Essentially the above will ensure that schools have a capacity for what Miles (1987) called "deep coping" in the face of continuing change. Miles and his colleagues found that secondary schools which were most successful in effecting improvement in the United States had such a capacity, in contrast to "shallow coping" in schools which were relatively unsuccessful. "Deep coping" refers to a continuing capacity for problem solving involving, for example, empowerment of staff, departmentally-based planning groups, school based in-service training and the acquisition and deployment of staff who were equipped to offer the necessary programs in the school. "Shallow coping" refers to a general absence of these capabilities, in effect an unwillingness and incapacity to face "the new realities" in their immediate environments.

The model for self-management which evolved from a research and development project in Tasmania has promise for guiding the efforts of schools, especially in relation to a capacity for "deep coping" and the development of an ongoing, collegial, cyclical approach to goal-setting, policy-making, planning, budgeting, implementing and evaluating (see Caldwell and Spinks, 1988). The model has been taken up in several Australian states, as well as in England and Wales and in New Zealand. It has been adopted as the model to guide the initial phases of training for all schools in New Zealand in the new patterns of governance in that country.

CONCLUSION

The emerging pattern for the governance of education in the late 1980's seems to be one in which governments are adopting a more powerful and focused role in terms of setting goals, establishing priorities and building frameworks for accountability -- all constituting a centralizing trend in the centralization-decentralization continuum -- at the same time as authority and responsibility for key functions are being shifted to the school level -- a decentralizing trend in the centralization - decentralization continuum.

Accepting that change, including turbulence, is now a permanent condition in education, we can gain some measure of stability as change proceeds if we can, as Drucker expressed it,

"understand, accept, and exploit the new realities". The description of some of these "new realities" and the analysis of the underlying policy issues was intended to achieve this end.

A major theme in the paper is that we now have enough experience around the world to reassure the skeptics: the various tensions can be resolved and the transition to a new era of governance can be managed.

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